

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 DHA-02 /081 W  
-----111018Z 122245 /12

R 110922Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5812  
INFO AMEMBASSY MASERU  
AMEMBASSY MBABANE  
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO  
AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
AMEMBASSY LAGOS  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM  
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
AMCONSUL DURBAN  
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0358

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, SF  
SUBJ: BLACK ATTITUDES TOWARD WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICS

REF: 76 PRETORIA 5912

1. SUMMARY: BLACKS LOOK AT WHITE POLITICS ON THREE  
LEVELS: (A) WHAT THE NATIONALIST-CONTROLLED GOVERNMENT AND  
PARLIAMENT DO AFFECTING THE POSITION OF BLACKS; (B) THE  
MANEUVERING WITHIN AND AMONG THE STABLISHED WHITE POLITICAL  
PARTIES; AND (C) THE OVERTURES OF LIBERAL WHITE PARTIES  
(ESSENTIALLY THE PRP) TO MAKE COMMON CAUSE WITH MODERATE  
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BLACKS SEEKING A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION TO SOUTH AFRICA'S  
RACIAL PROBLEMS. BLACK INTEREST CENTERS FOR THE MOST  
PART ON THE FIRST LEVEL. FEW BLACKS ARE CONCERNED  
WITH THE INTRA-MURAL ASPECTS OF WHITE POLITICS, CONSIDERING  
THAT THE ONLY WHITE POLITICS WHICH COUNT ARE THOSE WHICH  
TAKE PLACE WITHIN THE DOMINANT AFRIKANER COMMUNITY.  
MODERATE BLACK LEADERS SUCH AS BUTHELEZI ARE WILLING TO

TALK WITH WHITE POLITICIANS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF AN INTEGRATED SOUTH AFRICA BUT THEY DO SO WITH RESERVE.

2. WHILE MOST POLITICALLY-AWARE BLACKS HAVE LITTLE OR NO HOPE THAT THE NATIONALIST-DOMINATED EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES WILL MAKE MAJOR CHANGES IN APARTHEID, THEY RECOGNIZE THE POWER POSITION OF THE NATIONAL PARTY AND FOLLOW CLOSELY WHAT THE NATIONALIST LEADERSHIP SAYS AND DOES AFFECTING THEIR DAILY LIVES. RADICAL BLACKS, WHO GENERALLY REGARD SPEAKING WITH WHITES A FUTILE EXERCISE, SELDOM HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR DIALOGUE BECAUSE THEY AND WHITE LEADERS SHY AWAY FROM CONTACT. MODERATE BLACK LEADERS, WHO WOULD WELCOME DIALOGUE EVEN IF EXPERIENCE TEACHES THEM THAT LITTLE IS ACCOMPLISHED, USE THE FEW OPPORTUNITIES WHICH ARISE IN THE HOPE THAT THE REITERATION OF GRIEVANCES WILL BRING SOME AMELIORATION. END SUMMARY.

3. ATTITUDES TOWARD GOVERNMENT POLITICS: AMONG THE SEGMENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN BLACKS WHO FOLLOW WHITE POLITICS, THE PRIMARY INTEREST LIES IN HOW GOVERNMENT POLICY AFFECTS THEM. THERE IS A WIDE AWARENESS OF POLICIES AFFECTING BLACKS, BOTH IN THEIR DAILY LIVES, SUCH AS PASS LAWS AND BANTU EDUCATION, AND IN THE WIDER APARTHEID FRAMEWORK INCLUDING HOMELAND POLITICIES. NEW LEGISLATION, THIGHTENING AND LOOSENING OF RESTRICTIONS, AND DETENTIONS RECEIVE WIDE COVERAGE IN BOTH THE BLACK AND WHITE PRESS, AND ARE FOLLOWED CLOSELY. REACTION IS GENERALLY PASSIVE AND FATALISTIC EXCEPT FOR SUCH COURAGEOUS EDITORS AS PERCY QOBOZA, EDITOR OF THE WORLD, WHO DOES NOT HESITATE IN CRITICIZING GOVERNMENT

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POLICY AND ACTIONS.

4. BLACKS RECOGNIZE THE REALITY THAT THE AFRIKANER-BASED NATIONAL PARTY RUNS SOUTH AFRICA, AND THAT NO WHITE OPPOSITION GROUP IS IN A POSITION TO CHALLENGE THAT CONTROL. AFRIKANERDOM AND THE NATIONAL PARTY ARE VIEWED AS MONOLITHIC AND GEARED TOWARD PRESERVING THEIR OWN RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES AT THE EXPENSE OF BLACKS. THE VERKRAMP-VERLIG SPLIT IN THE NATIONAL PARTY IS NOT SEEN AS SIGNIFICANT SINCE BOTH GROUPS INTEND TO MAINTAIN THE CURRENT POWER STRUCTURE. MODERATE BLACKS ARE INTERESTED IN RECENT CALLS BY AFRIKANERS WITH INPECCABLE NP CREDENTIALS FOR MORE RAPID CHANGE. THEY RECOGNIZE, HOWEVER, THAT WHILE SUCH CHANGE COULD MEAN IMPROVEMENTS IN BLACKS' DAILY LIFE, IT WILL NOT MEAN A NEW POLITICAL DISPENSATION. MANY MODERATE BLACKS BELIEVE THAT THE BEST CHANCE OF MEANINGFUL CHANGE LIES IN AFRIKANER EVOLUTION AND THE RISE OF YOUNGER LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE NP.

5. A LARGE NUMBER OF CONSERVATIVE AND MODERATE BLACKS  
ACTUALLY PARTICIPATE ON THE FRINGES OF WHITE POLITICS  
THROUGH THEIR PART IN HOMELAND GOVERNMENT AND URBAN BANTU  
COUNCILS. SOME, SUCH AS KAISER MATANZIMA AND LUCAS  
MANGOPE, HAVE WILLINGLY COOPERATED WITH APARTHEID AND THE  
NATIONAL PARTY ON THE BASIS THAT THEREIN LIES THEIR BEST  
OPPORTUNITY PEACEFULLY TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF THEIR PEOPLE.  
WHILE AMONG URBAN BLACKS SUCH LEADERS ARE REGARDED WITH  
DISDAIN, THEY DO CONTINUE TO COMMAND A REASONABLE FOLLOWING  
AMONG THE GENERALLY LESS AWARE AND MORE CONSERVATIVE  
HOMELAND DWELLERS.  
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6. WHITE OPPOSITION GROUPS: WHITE POLITICAL MANEUVERING  
IS VIEWED WITH LIMITED INTEREST. WE HAVE SEEN THAT THE  
VERLIG-VERKRAMP SPLIT IN THE NATIONAL PARTY INSPIRES LITTLE  
HOPE. THERE IS, HOWEVER, A MEASURE OF GRUDGING RESPECT  
FOR AFRIKANERS IN THAT THEY ARE STRAIGHTFORWARD REGARDING

THEIR INTENTIONS, UNLIKE THE INEFFECTIVE AND VAGUE ENGLISH-SPEAKING LIBERALS WHO ARE OFTEN REGARDED AS HYPOCRITES. THE HANDFUL OF WHITE LIBERALS THOUGHT OF AS GENUINE BY BLACK OBSERVERS IS SMALL. WE HAVE HEARD ONLY A FEW NAMES ACCORDED REAL RESPECT: BEYERS NAUDE, ALAN PATON, DONALD WOODS, AND HELEN SUZMAN, FOR EXAMPLE. OCCASIONALLY SOME SPECIFIC DEED OR PRONOUNCEMENT BY  
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OTHER LIBERALS WILL DRAW MOMENTARY ACKNOWLEDGMENT BUT FEW HAVE ACHIEVED LASTING STATURE. IT IS ESSENTIAL TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE BLACK WANTS TO SPEAK FOR HIMSELF, NOT THROUGH SOME WHITE "INTERLOCUTOR." WHILE WHITE LIBERALS ARE GIVEN POLITE ACKNOWLEDGMENT, IT IS OFTEN SUGGESTED THAT THEY SHOULD CONCENTRATE THEIR EFFORTS NOT ON BLACKS, BUT ON CONVERTING OTHER WHITES. THE CURRENT MANEUVERING AMONG THE PROGRESSIVE REFORM, DEMOCRATIC, AND UNITED PARTIES DRAWS LITTLE REAL ATTENTION. IN BLACK EYES, THE OUTCOME CANNOT AFFECT IN ANY SIGNIFICANT WAY THE BASICS OF POWER. EVEN THE MORE MODERATE BLACKS, WHO WORK WITHIN THE SYSTEM AND WHO OFTEN EXPRESS APPRECIATION FOR CERTAIN WHITE STANDS, PLACE LITTLE CONFIDENCE IN THE IDEA THAT WHITE OPPOSITION GROUPINGS CAN DO MUCH FOR THEM EXCEPT REITERATE THE CASE FOR EQUALITY IN WHITE CIRCLES AT HOME AND ABROAD. AS CHIEF BUTHELEZI STATED BOTH IN HIS DECEMBER TALKS WITH PRP LEADERS AND IN RECENT US SPEECHES, THERE IS NOTHING WHITE LEADERSHIP IS DOING WHICH PROMISES HOPE, MAKING BOTH WHITE LIBERALISM AND THE REFORMIST APPROACH TO APARTHEID "IRRELEVANT" TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL SCENE.

7. BLACK-WHITE POLITICAL COOPERATION: ALTHOUGH IT IS ILLEGAL IN SOUTH AFRICA FOR ONE RACE GROUP TO "INTERFERE" IN THE POLITICAL AFFAIRS OF ANOTHER, THIS HAS NOT PREVENTED RECENT ATTEMPTS BY BLACK AND WHITE GROUPS TO COME TOGETHER AND TRY TO LAY THE BASIS FOR COOPERATION. THE MOST RECENT EFFORT IN THIS REGARD IS THE ATTEMPT TO FORGE SOME SORT OF WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE INKATHA MOVEMENT AND THE PRP. THIS EFFORT, WHICH CHIEF BUTHELEZI ORIGINALLY HOPED WOULD BE A MUCH BROADER COMBINATION OF ALL BLACK AND WHITE OPPOSITION GROUPS, IS STILL IN A FORMATIVE STAGE. WITH THE PRP BALKING AT SOME OF INKATHA'S RESOLUTIONS, THE LIMITED SCOPE AND PROBLEMS FACING EVEN THESE TWO MODERATE GROUPINGS IN TRYING TO COOPERATE ACROSS THE RACE LINES ILLUSTRATES BOTH THE ENORMOUS DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED AND WHY MANY BLACKS FEEL SUCH MOVES ARE USELESS.  
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BUTHELEZI AND OTHER LIKE-MINDED BLACKS, HOWEVER, PERCEIVE THE NCESSITY OF DIALOGUE WITH LIBERAL WHITES NOT SOM MUCH IN THE EXPECTATION OF MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN RACE RELATIONS AS IN THE HOPE OF AVOIDING FURTHER DETERIORATION INTO OUTRIGHT BLACK-WHITE CONFRONTATION WITH THE INHERENT DANGER OF INCREASED VIOLENCE.

8. THE MORE RADICAL BLACK HARDLY BOTHERS TO FOLLOW WHITE POLITICAL AFFAIRS EXCEPT AS THEY IMPACT ON HIM DIRECTLY, AND THAT MEANS COPING WITH THE PARTY IN POWER. AS FRUSTRATIONS AND PRESSURES MOUNT, THE ABILITY TO MAKE DIFFERENTIATIONS AMONG WHITES TENDS TO FADE. HE IS INCLINED TO LUMP ALL WHITES TOGETHER, PARTICULARLY SINCE NO ELEMENT OF THE WHITE COMMUNITY HAS BEEN ABLE TO BRING ABOUT VISIBLE IMPROVEMENT IN THE LOT OF BLACKS. AS ONE YOUNG BLACK RECENTLY RELEASED FROM DETENTION OBSERVED, "NO ONE ASKED ME WHETHER I WAS LIBERAL OR CONSERVATIVE WHEN THEY TOOK ME FROM HOME."

9. BLACK INTEREST IN WHITE POLITICS WILL CONTINUE TO CENTER ON THE NP. EXPECTATIONS WILL REMAIN LOW. ONLY A MAJOR SHIFT IN NP POLICY OR LEADERSHIP HOLDING THE PROMISE OF MEANINGFUL CHANGE WILL DISPEL THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE AFRIKANER WILL NOT SHARE POWER UNLESS FORCED TO DO SO.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009